

[By John Dillon](#)

Vermont's Congressional delegation is pleased that the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of President Barack Obama's health care law, including the mandate that all Americans have health insurance or pay a fine.

Congressman Peter Welch expressed relief at Thursday's Supreme Court ruling. He said it clears the way for Congress to make the health care law work for all Americans.

"This means we can focus on the implementation of a very challenging law without the cloud of uncertainty," Welch said. "That's been removed. And as long as the Supreme Court had not made its ruling, it was just a pitched battle about whether there was any underlying validity of the law."

Welch added that the decision also boosts health care reform efforts in Vermont, because it will allow the state to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in federal subsidies to implement the new health care exchange.

In a statement released shortly after the court issued its decision, Senator Bernie Sanders said the ruling bodes well for millions of Americans who have pre-existing conditions who can no longer be rejected by insurance companies.

"It is a good day for families with children under 26 who can keep their children on their health insurance policies," Sanders said. "It is a good day for women who can no longer be charged far higher premiums than men."

Speaking to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Patrick Leahy echoed Welch's reaction, saying the court's decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act was a victory for Vermonters and all Americans who, he said, have long been victimized by a deeply flawed health care system.

"Over much of the last century, generation after generation has unsuccessfully grappled with how to answer complex and increasingly urgent questions about how to let every American have access to quality, affordable health insurance," Leahy said. "The Affordable Care Act at least answered those questions. Although no bill is perfect, these are good reforms long needed by the American people, by American businesses and by the American economy."

After speaking on the court's decision, as chairman of the committee, Leahy waited for Republican senators to arrive for a quorum. When a quorum wasn't reached, he adjourned.